

# GOD'S BIG EASTER STORY

A HOLY WEEK JOURNEY



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The stories of Jesus' death and resurrection are heavy topics to reflect upon. Unlike the joyous baby- in-a-manger stories at Christmas, the stories that are bookended by a Palm Sunday parade and an Easter Sunday resurrection include betrayal, death, confusion, and deep sadness. But they also show Jesus' character as the loving, humble, servant King who welcomes all to the table, and they help us realize the depth of Christ's sacrifice, preparing our hearts and minds to experience Easter awe.

### What is Holy Week?

Beginning on Palm Sunday and ending with the three days that mark Jesus' trial, death, and resurrection, Holy Week is a time to remember Jesus' journey to the cross—and beyond. A lot happens from Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem to his appearance outside his tomb. Reading these stories throughout Holy Week gives us a chance to walk with Jesus in the last moments of his life and to experience the miracle of his resurrection.

### How to Use the Devotions

There's no right or wrong way to use these devotions. For example, you could read one each day during Holy Week, adding a new symbol to the pathway each day to mark the progression toward Easter. Alternatively, you could combine some of the stories and read them over a few days. Or maybe this year you're only able to read a few of the stories together. That's OK.

We invite you to use the five steps below as a framework for your time together.

**BREATHE:** Calm your head, heart, and hands as together you slowly breathe in . . . and out.

**CALL TO WORSHIP:** Spend time preparing to spend time with God by reading the call to worship. Have one family member read the "leader" part and everyone else respond with the "All" part.

**READ:** Spend time in God's story by reading the suggested passage from the Bible or from a children's story Bible. Some days the selections are longer than others.

*For families with kids:* One way to keep kids of all ages engaged is by including them in the telling of the story. You can invite pre-readers to make up an action to do each time they hear a particular word or name. Assign readers a section of the story to read aloud, or have them read the lines of a character as you narrate the story.

In addition we also have a Bible story video of the passage for each day on the Church Center app under the Holy Week tab or on our website - [chapelhillcc.church/holyweek](http://chapelhillcc.church/holyweek). We also encourage you to listen to the passage on the YouVersion Bible app.

**WONDER:** Use the questions to reflect on the story. We've provided you with "wondering questions" because they work well for everyone, they have no right or wrong answers, and they result in deeper thinking about God and about the lives of the people in the story. *For families with kids:* encourage kids to use their imaginations as you wonder together about these stories. You might want to end this time by asking, "What do you wonder about this story?"

**PRAY:** Close your time with prayer using the provided suggestions or your own words and ideas.

### For Families with Kids

Each day during your devotion time encourage your kids to color the symbol that corresponds with that day and stick it on the Pathway leading to Jesus' resurrection.

Other easy ideas

- Use LEGO™ or other blocks to build something featured in each day's story.
- Make a colorful sign or banner with the words "Alleluia! Jesus Is Alive!" written on it. Hide it somewhere for your children to discover on Easter Sunday as part of your celebration. Or have your child make the banner and then hide it for you to find!
- Celebrate Jesus' resurrection by singing or listening to a favorite Easter song together.



## SUNDAY - PALM SUNDAY PARADE

**BREATHE:** Calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.

**CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm 118:26**

**Leader:** Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

**All:** From the house of the Lord we bless you.

**READ: Matthew 21:1-1**

Watch the Bible story video on the Church Center app or [chapelhillcc.church/holyweek](http://chapelhillcc.church/holyweek)

**WONDER:** What would it be like to be in the crowd that welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem? What would you have said or done if you had been there?

**PRAYER:** Dear Jesus, like the people praising you when you entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, we give you praise for coming to earth to save us from our sins. As we journey with you toward the cross this week, help us to keep our focus on you and your sacrifice. You are worthy of our worship. Amen.

- Take turns sharing things you want to praise Jesus for.

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## MONDAY- THROWING OUT THE MONEY CHANGERS

**BREATHE:** Calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.

**CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 36:5**

**Leader:** Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens,

**All:** your faithfulness to the skies.

**READ: Matthew 21:12-17**

Watch the Bible story video on the Church Center app or [chapelhillcc.church/holyweek](http://chapelhillcc.church/holyweek)

**WONDER:** What does this story show you about Jesus? What words do you think the people Jesus healed would use to describe him? How do you think the children's faces looked as they shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

**PRAYER:** Dear Jesus, all glory and honor belong to you! May we not rob you of your glory by doing things in your name for our own personal gain. Overturn the tables of pride and selfishness in our hearts this day. Amen.

- Quietly ask Jesus to reveal any pride or selfish behaviors in your heart and then confess those things to him. Then remember that he came to die for those sins and offer you forgiveness.



## TUESDAY- THE FOOT WASHING

**BREATHE:** Calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.

**CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 71:1**

**Leader:** In you, Lord, I have taken refuge;

**All:** let me never be put to shame.

**READ: John 13:1-17**

Watch the Bible story video on the Church Center app or [chapelhillcc.church/holyweek](http://chapelhillcc.church/holyweek)

**WONDER:** Imagine how the water would feel on your tired feet. What would it be like to have someone so important serve you by washing your smelly, dirty feet? Why do you think Jesus told the disciples to wash one another's feet? How do you serve others?

**PRAYER:** Dear Jesus, you are the ultimate example of humility and servant leadership. Thank you for showing us your gracious love, even when we least deserved it. Help us to look for opportunities to serve others and show your love to them. Amen.

-Take turns sharing names of people who serve you—family members, coaches, teachers, people in the community. Thank God for them and then ask him to help you serve others too.

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## WEDNESDAY- THE LAST SUPPER

**BREATHE:** Calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.

**CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 70:4**

**Leader:** But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who long for your saving help always say,

**All:** "The Lord is great!"

**READ: John 19:14-30**

Watch the Bible story video on the Church Center app or [chapelhillcc.church/holyweek](http://chapelhillcc.church/holyweek)

**WONDER:** Do you remember the words Jesus said about the bread and the cup? (If not, reread verses 19 and 20 together.) Wonder how the Lord's Supper celebration at your church is like the special meal Jesus had with his disciples. Why might Jesus have used food and drink to remind us how much he loves us? What do you wonder about the Lord's Supper?

**PRAYER:** Dear Jesus, thank you for the gifts of bread and juice that allow us to remember and celebrate your body and blood given for us. In you we find life, salvation, and hope. Help us to respond to you in gratitude for all you provide. Amen.

-If you have some bread and juice with you, take communion as a group.





## THURSDAY- A SAD NIGHT

**BREATHE:** Calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.

**CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 116:1**

**Leader:** I love the Lord, for he heard my voice;

**All:** he heard my cry for mercy.

**READ: Luke 22:39-62**

Watch the Bible story video on the Church Center app or [chapelhillcc.church/holyweek](http://chapelhillcc.church/holyweek)

**WONDER:** Wonder why the disciples fell asleep. How do you think Jesus felt when all his friends were too tired to support him? Imagine that you're Peter, a follower and friend of Jesus. After Jesus was arrested, what emotions would you be feeling? Why do you think Peter denied Jesus? Why do you think Peter cried?

**PRAYER:** Dear Jesus, we confess that we have acted like we don't know you when we sin. We often seek to protect ourselves and our own interests instead of following you. Thank you for forgiving us and loving us in spite of our weaknesses and fears. Help us to trust you and stand strong when we are afraid. Amen.

- Quietly confess any sins in your life and then ask Jesus for the strength you need to overcome them.

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## FRIDAY- JESUS DIES

**BREATHE:** Calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.

**CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 22:22**

**Leader:** I will declare your name to my people;

**All:** in the assembly I will praise you.

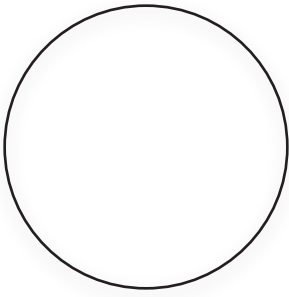
**READ: John 19:14-30**

Watch the Bible story video on the Church Center app or [chapelhillcc.church/holyweek](http://chapelhillcc.church/holyweek)

**WONDER:** What do you wonder about Jesus dying on the cross? How does this story make you feel?

**PRAYER:** Dear Jesus, thank you for giving up your body and blood for us so that we could be forgiven and made right with the Father. Without your sacrifice, we would be lost in our sins. Help us to always live in gratitude for what you have done on our behalf. We love you. Amen.

-Take turns sharing why you are thankful for Jesus' work on the cross.



## SATURDAY- JESUS IS BURIED

**BREATHE:** Calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.

**CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 31:16**

**Leader:** Let your face shine on your servant;

**All:** save me in your unfailing love.

**READ: John 19:38-42**

Watch the Bible story video on the Church Center app or [chapelhillcc.church/holyweek](http://chapelhillcc.church/holyweek)

**WONDER:** When Jesus was alive, Joseph of Arimathea was afraid to tell others he was a follower of Jesus. But after Jesus died, Joseph asked Pilate if he could bury Jesus' body. Wonder why Joseph wanted to do this for Jesus. What emotions do you think Joseph and Nicodemus were feeling as they buried Jesus? Where do you think the other disciples were on this day? How do you think they were feeling? How does this part of the story make you feel? Create your own symbol for this day in the blank circle above. (If each person would like to make their own symbol, trace the circle and make extras.)

**PRAYER:** Dear Jesus, when all hope seems lost, you are still in control. Even when you were dead and buried in the tomb, you never lost control of the situation. While we are saddened by your torture, crucifixion, and burial, we know that you are still God and that your story doesn't end in defeat. Help us to bury our sins in the grave with you this day as we await your resurrection tomorrow. Amen.

-Take time to be silent after this devotional. Whether it's for 60 seconds or for 60 minutes, be intentional in being still before God. Use this time to thank Jesus for dying for you.





# Sunday- Jesus is Alive!

**BREATHE:** Calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.

**CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 118:21**

**Leader:** I will give you thanks, for you answered me;

**All:** you have become my salvation.

**READ: John 20:1-18**

Watch the Bible story video on the Church Center app or [chapelhillcc.church/holyweek](http://chapelhillcc.church/holyweek)

**WONDER:** What do you think Jesus' friends thought when they saw that his tomb was empty? Why do you think Jesus' friend Mary Magdalene didn't realize at first that she was talking to Jesus? What would you have done when you realized Jesus was alive again? Who would you run to tell?

**PRAYER:** Dear Jesus, you are alive! You are victorious over death and sin! In you we have new life, power, and deliverance from sin! We celebrate your resurrection today and give you praise for who you are and what you've done! May we live lives of freedom and victory because of what you've done! Amen.

-Take turns sharing what difference the resurrection makes in your life. Thanks Jesus for those things!

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